

# **Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; September 13, 2001; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque**

## *In attendance:*

Neal Ackerly, Dos Rios Consultants,  
Inc./Corps

Scott Anderholm, USGS

Carolyn Brunfield, Corps

Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps

Darrell Eidson, Corps

Richard Fike, Corps

Hector Garcia, USBR

Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps

Rhea Graham, NMISC

Bill Hays, NMDGF

Conrad Keyes, Jr., EWRI/Corps

Steve Kolk, USBR

Dick Kreiner, Corps

Russ MacRae, USFWS

Natalie Maldonado, R.F. Weston/Corps

Mike Marcus, SWCA/NMISC

Clay Mathers, Corps

Maija Mencks, USFWS

Anna Muñoz, USFWS

Claudia Oakes, SWCA/NMISC

Brian Ortiz, USFWS

Christine Pacheco, NMED/SWQB

Chris Perez, USFWS

Cynthia Piirto, Corps

Gary Rutherford, Corps

Bill Sayre, Rio Chama Acequia Association

Tim Seaman, NMOCA

Gail Stockton, Corps

Julie Tsatsaros, NMED/SWQB

- ❖ Greg Thomas of the Natural Heritage Institute in Berkeley, California gave a presentation on a conceptual physical assessment project for the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo to the group via telephone. The Institute is a non-profit natural resource professional group, composed of scientists, economists, planners, and lawyers. Technical team members can find out more about this group through their web site at [www.n-h-i.org](http://www.n-h-i.org).
- The Rio Grande/Rio Bravo work is envisioned to be part of a larger group of transboundary projects. The Natural Heritage Institute's role is to coordinate non-governmental efforts to improve water management system-wide. They also intend to work with government agencies in both the U.S. and Mexico.
- They believe that there is a need for improved water management because the demands on the river are increasing, but it is already fully appropriated.
- Tiers of analysis include:
  - Creating a physical representation of the system using RiverWare;
  - Generating improved water management scenarios that would benefit transboundary and transjurisdiction.
  - Analyzing how the system could be changed and identify incentives to water users that would encourage them to implement promising scenarios.

- The project's intended goal is to coordinate with five different modeling efforts in the basin, including one in Colorado, Water Operations Review and EIS, Pecos, and two in the lower Rio Grande.
- The questions and answers followed the project presentation.
  - Do they intend to incorporate groundwater aspects of the entire basin?
    - They hope to do this, but may look at the physical availability of water first, then at water quality.
  - Who would own RiverWare?
    - They plan to install the software at the Monterrey, Mexico, Institute of Technology and possibly in Juarez. They have not selected a location for the model in the U.S. yet.
    - They are designing an information management database to be accessed and operated remotely.
  - Would there be a central coordinating data management system for all efforts in the basin?
    - They have not worked this out yet, but know that they do not want competing systems. Their focus right now is integration of multiple projects.
  - Has IBWC has embraced this project, and if so what is their intended timeframe?
    - They are in discussion with the IBWC and are hoping that they will participate.
    - The timeframe depends on resources. Their initial goal is to get participants on the Mexico side up to speed with the other modeling efforts.
- ❖ For most of the rest of the meeting, technical teams met in their groups and reviewed the draft multi-resource scenarios that were developed by the Project Managers. The scenarios were distributed to each team. These may be submitted to the Executive Committee to demonstrate some interim products.
  - Technical team members were instructed to assess how their resources would be affected under each part of each scenario by rating in general categories of excellent, good, neutral/don't know, bad, and terrible.
  - If teams did not have enough information to rate the different items under each scenario, they were asked to provide their questions and information needs to the Project Managers.
  - **Technical teams were instructed to continue working on the rating sheets and to send or hand them to one of the Project Managers by close of business on September 24. They should also hand in their notes and questions on the scenarios.**
  - The Project Managers may add a water quality component under each objective.
- ❖ Some of the technical team members held a teleconference with USBR staff in Alamosa to learn more about the purpose and operation of the Closed Basin Project.
- ➡ ❖ **The next ID NEPA Team meeting will be held at the Corps of Engineers building in Albuquerque at 1:00 p.m. on October 11.**